



# Chalk Talk

Greetings | Feature | News | GG Awards

PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

It is said 'that which is most personal is universal'. Blake Seward, a history teacher from Smith Falls, Ontario proved that adage true when he researched the story of his great uncle who fought and died at Passchendaele in WWI. It began as an innocent question posed to him by his cousin which had left him without an answer. This very personal quest to find out about a family relation led to the development of a class project intended to help his students to understand that the soldiers whose names were carved onto their local cenotaph, had been young people with lives and families before leaving to serve in the Great War. Mr. Seward's passion for history and his commitment to this project has been recognized by several awards including the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

Today, there are only two remaining veterans from World War I. Though there are an increasingly diminishing number of World War II veterans who are still with us, there are many who are interested in telling their stories.



Stanley Carroll, (pictured left, visiting students at Sandowne Public School in Waterloo), is a WWII army veteran and retired teacher who participates in The Dominion Institute's Memory Project.

This week's issue contains information on how your classroom can benefit from learning about history from those who lived it.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know what you think!](#)

Mary Kovack

## Veterans from Past Generations Share Stories



Created in 2001, *The Memory Project* is the Dominion Institute's flagship educational programme, designed to connect veterans and students online and in classrooms across the country. The Memory Project Speakers' Bureau includes 1,500 veteran volunteers from across Canada visiting classrooms and community groups to share their stories with youth.

On November 6, 2006, The Memory Project organized a very special school visit. Capt. Marc Bossi and Mr. Leonard Levy spoke at Crestwood Secondary School in Toronto.



Capt. Mark Bossi had recently returned from his service in Afghanistan with the 48th Highlanders of Canada. He shared stories of the rebuilding projects in which he participated and spoke of his interactions with the civilians he was assisting. Leonard Levy who served in the Air Force during the Second World War kept the class riveted as he described dangerous escapes in the field, as well as adventures he'd had while on leave in London.

The visit and the story, [recorded by CBC television](#), aired numerous times during Remembrance week. Students and teachers have expressed their interest in hosting different generations of veterans and the Memory Project plans to create more of these partnerships in 2007.

Educators interested in having a veteran visit their classroom, are invited to book a speaker at [www.thememoryproject.com/request\\_speaker.asp](http://www.thememoryproject.com/request_speaker.asp).

[Excerpts from keynote address by senior Globe & Mail writer, Rod Mickleburgh, at 'The Memory Project' Conference Victoria, Feb. 13, 2007] To read the entire speech, [click here](#).

"Six Million Jews perished in The Holocaust. The horror is beyond comprehension...Only when you read something extremely personal, like Anne Franks' heartbreaking diary, do you truly feel the enormity of what happened to six million people. Yet it's the narrative of just one person, recounting her story and her family's doomed struggle to survive. These are the stories we remember. The personal stories, And so it is with two of the most pivotal events in Canadian History, the First and Second World Wars. We can read all we want about such World War I events such as the heroic Canadian charge at Vimy Ridge, or the appalling battles that cost tens of thousands of lives for just a few hundred yards of territory. But how does that really ring true compared with, say, reading letters to home from ordinary soldiers, trapped in the trenches, witness to the war's remorseless carnage? From them, you find out what the war was really like, the daily slaughter, the routines, and yes, even sometimes the fun they had. It's often forgotten that beneath those bulky uniforms we see in the jerky newsreel pictures were soldiers still in their late teens. Just kids.

That's what makes [The Memory Project] the Dominion Institute's ambitious program to record and preserve the personal stories of as many veterans as possible, so valuable. Maybe even more worthwhile is the program that brings veterans into the schools to tell their stories directly to the students, in person. History remains so important to understanding who and what we are today, but you keep hearing that kids think history is boring. All those dates, names and long ago events that mean little to the downloading, video-game generation. What better way to make history come alive than to hear it first hand? Not from a teacher, but from someone who was there. Individual stories, the memorable detail. Face to face with living history, rather than a musty textbook.

It's imperative that we hear from veterans now, before it's too late. Get them on tape, keep a record of what they tell us, and try as much as possible for their stories to live on by passing them on to our youngest generation. It's not always easy. For many who served in World War II, their time was not, the best years of their lives. It was awful...The father of my best friend in high school was like that. He was in a German POW camp for three years after being shot down. But he never talked about it to his four kids. Not a word. Then a couple of years ago, he came down to pay his respects to my mom on her 85th birthday. My brother, who's bit of a war buff, began asking him questions about the war. And Bill answered. A few anecdotes, a few details, and the quiet observation that he saw things he will never forget, and that affect him even now. Their conversation wasn't that long, but later, his son Terry, who had been listening in, said he learned more in those 15 minutes or so than in all the years living in the same house with his Dad. The point is, no matter how reluctant or shy, with a bit of coaxing, veterans have stories to tell, about experiences we can hardly imagine. And everyone's history is different, and in its own way, compelling."

[Source: [The Memory Project](#) — an initiative of [The Dominion Institute](#)]

**C**anada's National History Society invites nominations for the 12<sup>th</sup> Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. History and Social Studies teachers need be unsung heroes no more! This is their opportunity to join the ranks of other accomplished Canadians who have been recognized by the Governor General for the country's top Honor. Candidates need only submit an original lesson plan or project description, supporting student work, evaluation and a statement of their teaching philosophy. Teachers can present themselves or a group, or be nominated by a student, parent or colleague.



#### **Six Recipients Awarded \$2,500!**

Six recipients will be awarded \$2,500, a medal and a trip to Ottawa for two, to attend the Awards ceremony and presentation by Her Excellency.

#### **Six Schools Share in the Winnings!**

An additional \$1,000 is awarded to the recipients' schools.

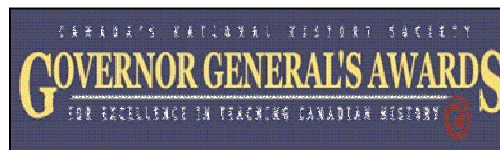
All Approaches are Welcome!

Deadline for Submissions: April 28, 2007

**Rules:** <http://www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=ru1>

**Form:** <http://www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=nom>

**Information:** [prixggawards@historysociety.ca](mailto:prixggawards@historysociety.ca) or call 1-800-861-1008



## 'Lest We Forget' — from class project to national success story!



- The *Lest We Forget* Project is the inspiration of Blake Seward, a history teacher at Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute, in Smiths Falls, Ontario.



Blake Seward, History  
Teacher & Founder, The  
'Lest We Forget' Project

- Concerned that the contributions of those who died serving in the First World War have been largely forgotten, Seward began researching the military history of his own great uncle, who fought and died at Passchendaele.
- Seward soon realized that this type of research would be an exciting way to make history come alive in the classroom. It would give students the opportunity to document the life stories of the men and women who served in the First World War.
- Through the keen interest of the students in Smiths Falls and Seward's leadership, schools in Ontario and in other provinces adopted the project. Although originally based on the Ontario educational model, the project can be adapted and applied to meet curriculum expectations in every province.

[Source: [Library and Archives Canada, cenotaph research](#)]

## Education News and Recommended Links

[One of Canada's last WWI veterans dies](#) – CBC News, February 22, 2007

One of Canada's last three surviving veterans from the First World War, Victor (Lloyd) Clemett, has died. He was 107. Lloyd Clemett enlisted about a month after turning 16. Born on Dec. 10, 1899, in Toronto, Clemett died late Wednesday night at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Clemett enlisted in the army in 1916, a month after turning 16, following in the footsteps of his three older brothers who had already left for the battlefields. Remarkably, all four would later return home — though one suffered shrapnel injuries to the head. He would survive to the ripe old age of 96.

[Canada's Last Great War Veteran](#) — News release, The Dominion Institute, November 21, 2006

“VICTORY! Parliament approves State Funeral for last veteran of the First World War. The House of Commons unanimously passed a motion today to hold a state funeral for the last veteran of the First World War. The passage of the motion brings to a successful conclusion the Dominion Institute's online petition asking the federal government to offer a full State Funeral for the family of the last Great War veteran.”

[Teacher colleges face glut; Education faculties rejecting applicants as teaching supply exceeds demand](#) – Daniel Girard, Education reporter, *TheStar.com*, March 12, 2007

“Thousands of aspiring teachers are finding closed doors at education colleges and only part-time positions at Ontario schools – completely opposite to the scenario of a decade ago. Across the province, more than 16,000 candidates have applied to teachers' colleges for spots beginning this fall, an increase of 113 per cent over the past decade. Less than half – about 7,500 – will get in, according to various sources, including the Ontario College of Teachers.”

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